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ABSTRACT

A multiethnic curriculum reflects and is sensitive to the ethnic diversity within American society. In this kind of curriculum, ethnic content about a variety of ethnic groups is incorporated into all subject areas, from preschool through grade twelve. Several goals should be considered when developing a multiethnic curriculum. The curriculum should attempt to: (1) enhance students' self identity and self concept, (2) develop students' understanding of and tolerance for America's ethnic groups, and (3) help students' decisionmaking skills so that they can become effective change agents in society. Learning activities which reflect multiethnic learning goals include: using a culture's oral tradition and folk tales, examining the origins and use of foods eaten by different cultures, using open ended stories that present problem situations, showing films, role playing and dramatization. (Author/AM)

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GENERAL ASSISTANCE CENTER ON EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY
Teachers College, Columbia University

MULTI-ETHNIC CURRICULUM

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DEFINITION OF A MULTI-ETHNIC CURRICULUM

Introduction

Ethnicity is an integral part of American society. A meaningful understanding of our society cannot be grasped unless the separate ethnic groups that constitute it are clearly acknowledged and understood. Studies in schools therefore must be established which build an awareness of the ethnic diversity which exists within our national society; the contributions of that diversity as well as its sources of tensions and dissension; and of the sense of personal pride that can accompany positive identification with an ethnic group.

Definition

A Multi-ethnic curriculum refers to curricula which reflects and is sensitive to the ethnic diversity within American society. Ethnic content about a variety of ethnic groups is incorporated into all subject areas, pre-school through grade twelve.

Comment

Effective teaching about American ethnic groups can best take place within an educational atmosphere which accepts, encourages and respects the expression of ethnic and social diversity.

Description

An "ethnic group" is a specific kind of cultural group which has the following characteristics:

- It has an ancestral tradition and its members share a sense of peoplehood.
- It has some distinguishing value orientations and behavior patterns

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Comment

For the purposes of this unit we are considering those groups which preceded the creation of the Nation; e.g. Native Americans, or were external to it; e.g. immigrant groups.

Comment

Although distinguishing features of ethnic groups overlap they can be identified in the following ways:

- Race, ie; Afro-American, Japanese-American.
- Unique Cultural and Religious attributes, ie; Jewish-American
- National Origin, ie; Polish-Americans

GOALS OF A MULTI-ETHNIC CURRICULUM

The following goals should be considered when developing a multi-ethnic curriculum:

Goals

- to enhance self identity/understanding of students through an appreciation of their personal background and family heritage.
- to strengthen self-concept of students through high regard for their home languages, contributions and cultures.
- to help students develop a more sophisticated understanding of the diverse ethnic groups that make up America and a greater tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences.
- to help students develop decision-making skills so that they can become effective change agents in a contemporary society.

Comment

On the following pages you will find suggestions for learning activities which reflect multi-ethnic learning goals.

FOLKLORIC FOUNDATIONS [1]

Introduction

All cultures have an oral tradition through which favored stories, songs, poems, and proverbs have been passed down from one generation to the next. These tales and truths reflect the fantasies, facts, superstitions, ethical beliefs, mores, and customs of each culture. Because they present the hopes, needs, experiences, and ideas common to people in general, many of the tales now written down reappear in literature with variations appropriate to a given culture. By becoming acquainted with folklore from varying cultures, students can learn to appreciate commonalities among people from diverse cultural groups, and, at the same time, become more aware of cultural characteristics through specific variations on common themes.

Here is a list of suggested activities:

- To demonstrate how folk tales reflect commonalities among people as human beings.
    - The teacher will select appropriate tales from different cultures. After hearing the tales (either read or told by students or the teacher), students will discuss common features found in each of the tales. Attention should be paid to personality traits of characters and to morals of stories.
    - Students should be aided in keeping track of recurring themes.

      (Example: "The Gingerbread Boy," known variously as "The Pancake" in Norway, "Johnny Cake" in England, and "Wee Bannock" in Scotland)
- To demonstrate specific cultural characteristics reflected in tales with common themes.
    - The teacher will select and read (or have read) appropriate tales from different cultures which present a common theme. Students will discuss both common elements and cultural variations as reflected in the tales.
    - Students may write their own version as a class or individually.

      (Example: "The Anansi Tales" and "Br'er Rabbit"-- African and American)

- To distinguish among the various forms of folklore used by various cultures (recommended for intermediate and upper grades).

    - Using appropriate examples of folk tales, lengends, myths, fairy tales, and fables from different cultures, the teacher will aid students in defining and distinguishing among the various forms. Cultural variations should be distinguished from literary variations.

- To distinguish fact from fiction in folklore.

    - After reading selected myths and legends, the teacher will elicit discussion from students regarding what is imaginary and what is real in each tale. Care should be taken to clarify and cultural misconceptions in this discussion.

- To demonstrate variations in folklore within a specific cultural group.

    - The teacher will select and read a sample of folk tales from different Native American tribes, for example, or from African, Afro-American, Plantation Tales.

    - Students will discuss both common and specific elements in each of the tales.

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES FOR FOLKLORIC FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In this section you will find suggestions for activities at different grade levels, for activities extending into other content areas, and for alternative and enrichment learning activities.
Here is a list of additional activities related to the topic:

- Students should have access to a large variety of folk tales which they can independently read or listen to on tape or records. Time should be provided for students to discuss their individual selections in small groups or as total-class presentations.
- Students may tell familiar folk tales to small groups or to the total class. Students should ask older members of their families and/or communities for additional suggestions.
- Students may dramatize folk tales or put on puppet plays.
- Students may illustrate characters and action of folk tales individually or in groups (e.g., murals, bulletin boards, collages).
- Students may compare orally or in writing mythical or legendary tales with scientific or historical facts they have gained through research.
- Students may write modern versions of ancient folk tales for a multicultural class anthology.
- Students may compose modern folk tales from popular sayings or legends about modern heroes/heroines.

DISCOVERING THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF FOODS [2]

Introduction

Foods eaten in the United States reflect the diversity of its citizens. Many foods have their origins in distinct cultural traditions. Therefore, an exploration of the origins of different foods can provide insight into the particular cultural group represented.

Here is a list of suggested activities:

- To aid students in identifying their favorite foods.
  - Students should make a list of their favorite foods and bring pictures of them if possible. They should then make a graph of class preferences to demonstrate common favorites.
- To help students discover the cultural origin of their favorite food.
  - Students should be asked if they know the cultural history of their favorite food. Various cookbooks descriptive of different cultural foods should be displayed in the room library. Students should explore the cookbooks, examining the different recipes and illustrations in order to collect needed information.
  - Foods that have a common cultural history should be grouped together, and their origin should be discussed. A food learning center should be set up in the room to display the research reports and pictures.
- To promote an understanding of why certain foods are eaten by particular groups.
  - The students should construct a large state, national and world map. They should mark the food at its original location and trace what forces led to the use of a food in a particular location.
- To help students become familiar with the foods from a cultural background with which they were not previously acquainted.
  - Student committees should select foods from a common cultural origin and prepare food samples for the class. These food samples should be shared with the class as students give the oral report on their favorite food.

- In lieu of committee participation, individual students may offer special family recipes for class experiences. The students would be responsible for organizing the food preparation and selecting other class members to help. As the class samples the food, the student would be responsible for providing them with an overview of the traditions behind the food.

- Students should visit some restaurants and interview owners about the cultural history of the food they serve.

- To share with family members the multicultural understanding acquired in school.

  - Students should plan a dinner for family and community members, for example, a smorgasbord of foods representative of various cultures. They should develop displays and short talks to inform their guests on the results of their study.

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Here is a list of additional activities related to the topic:

- Students may work with ratios, changing the measurements for ingredients in recipes to accommodate larger or smaller groups.
- Students may compute the cost of the foods.
- Students may illustrate menus or make colloges of the origins of foods.
- Students may investigate how various ingredients interact and what causes foods to change.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES

FOR DEVELOPING THE UNIT: BLACK PROTEST [3]

Step	Procedure	Hints
1	Show students the film (or a similar one) Martin Luther King: Montgomery to Memphis	Focus on the reasons why Black protest emerged and the forms which it took during the years covered in the film
2	Tell the students the story of the slave mutinies that occured both on the West African coast and in mid-ocean	a) Herbert Aptheker, American Negro Slave Revolts is a highly regarded resource b) Have students role-play situations
3	Ask students to hypothesize by asking the following questions: a) Why do you think the slaves were captured? b) Why do you think they started mutinies? c) Why didn't the mutinies end the slave trade?	Ask valuing questions as well: a) Do you think that it was right for slaves to be captured? Why or why not? b) Do you think that it was right for slaves to rebel? Why or why not?
4	Ask students to read (or read to them) selections on the slave trade so that they can test their hypothesis.	Helpful sources are: a) James A. Banks and Cherry A. Banks, March Toward Freedom: A History of Black Americans, 2nd ed. b) Edgar A. Toppin, The Black American in United States History
5	Ask three different groups of students to research these three topics: a) The Gabriel Prosser revolt of 1800 b) The Denmark Vesey revolt of 1822 c) The Nat Turner revolt of 1831	To guide the research pose the following questions: a) Where did the revolt occur? b) Why did the revolt occur? c) Who led the revolt? d) Was the revolt successful? e) How were the rebels punished? Why were they punished?

FOR DEVELOPING THE UNIT: BLACK PROTEST

Step	Procedure	Hints
6	Have groups present their research. Class discussion should focus on ways in which groups were alike and different, and why, of the three rebellions, only the Turner revolt was successful.	Ask each of the groups to plan and present a dramatization showing the sequence of events in the rebellion they studied.
7	Ask students to research the lives of and "become" in dramatization the following people important in the abolitionary movement and in the Underground Railroad: a) Henry Highland Garnet b) Robert Purvis c) Samuel Cornish d) James Forten e) Frederick Douglass f) Harriet Tubman g) Sojourner Truth	When the dramatizations are presented discuss these questions with the class: a) Why did Black abolitonists opposed slavery? How did their views differ from those of White abolitonists? Why did White abolitionists discriminate against Black abolitionists? b) What was the Underground Railroad? How did it help slaves escape? Who were some of the outstanding "conductors" on the railroad? If you had been a slave would you have tried to escape? Why or why not?
8	Ask individual students or groups of students to research the following organizations and movements to describe ways in which they protested racism and discrimination: a) The Negro Convention Movement (1800's) b) The Niagra Movement (1905) c) The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1910) d) The National Urban League (1911) e) The Universal Negro Improvement Association (1914) f) The Black church in the 1800's	When students share their research with the class the discussion should focus on how these organizations and movements expressed discontent with the Afro-Americans plight. Have students consider: a) The actions they took to improve it. b) The reasons for successes and/or failure.

FOR DEVELOPING THE UNIT: BLACK PROTEST

Step	Procedure	Hints
9	Have the class role-play a civil rights conference in 1966 in which the leaders of the organizations below debate the future directions of the movement: a) Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) b) National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) c) National Urban League d) Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) e) Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) f) Black Panther Party g) Revolutionary Action Movement RAM	Each organizational representative should be throughly familiar with his/her organizational philosophical position in 1966.
10	Have students role play a meeting of the following people after a serious racial rebellion in 1967. These people have met to decide what can be done to eliminate the causes of city riots. Roles: a) The Mayor of the City b) An SCLC spokesperson c) An NAACP spokesperson d) A National Urban League spokesperson e) A CORE spokesperson f) A SNCC spokesperson g) A Black Panther party spokesperson h) A RAM spokesperson i) A young man who has participated in a riot	To structure this activity more tightly, write a role description for each character on a 3X5 inch index card and give the cards to the student role-players.
11	Help students to summarize the unit and to derive key generalizations	A data retrieval form may be useful: Black Protest: DATA RETRIEVAL CHART * Form of Protest | Goal of Protests | Ways of Protests | Results of Protest * Organization or Movement

USE OF OPEN-ENDED STORIES

Introduction

Open ended stories present problem situations. They can be excellent tools for stimulating class discussions of issues related to ethnic studies and other human relations problems.

After reading an open-ended story to the class, the teacher can have the students do the following:

- identify problems within the story
- identify the values of the characters
- discuss the courses of action that might be taken to resolve the problems
- discuss the possible consequences of the proposed solutions

Optional

Students can act out or role play solutions to the problems

Suggestions

The following two books include open-ended stories which deal with problems in ethnic relations: Jean D. Grambs, Intergroup Education: Methods and Materials; Fannie R. Shaftel and George Shaftel, Role-Playing for Social Values: Decision-making in the Social Studies.

Example

TRYING TO BUY A HOME IN LAKEWOOD ISLAND [4]

About a year ago, Joan and Henry Green, a young Black couple, moved from the West Coast to a large city in the Midwest. They moved because Henry finished his Ph.D. in chemistry and took a job at a big university in Midwestern City. Since they have been in Midwestern City, the Greens have rented an apartment in the central area of the city. However, they have decided that they want to buy a house. Their apartment has gotten too small for the many books and other things they have accumulated during the year. In addition to wanting more space, they also want a house so that they can get breaks on their income tax which they do not get living in an apartment. The Greens also think that a house will be a good financial investment.

The Greens have decided to move into a suburban community. They want a new house and most of the houses within the city limits are rather old. They also feel that they can get a larger house for their money in the suburbs than in the city. They have looked at several suburban communities and have decided that they like Lakewood Island better than any of the others. Lakewood Island is an all White community, which is made up primarily of lower-middle-class and middle-class residents. There are a few wealthy families in Lakewood Island, but they are the exceptions rather than the rule.

Joan and Henry Green have become very frustarated because of the problems they have experienced trying to buy a home in Lakewood Island. Before they go out to look at a house, they carefully study the newspaper ads. When they arrived at the first house in which they were interested, the owner told them that his house had just been sold. A week later they decided to work with a realtor. When they tried to close the deal on the next house they wanted, the realtor told them that the owner had raised the price three thousand dollars because he had had the house appraised since he put it on the market and discovered that his selling price was much too low. When the Greens tried to buy a third house in Lakewood Island, the owner told them that he had decided not to sell because he had not gotten the job in another city which he was almost sure that he would get when he put his house up for sale. He explained that the realtor had not removed the ad about his house from the newspaper even though he had told him that he had decided not to sell a week earlier. The realtor the owner had been working with had left the real estate company a few days ago. Henry is very bitter and feels that he and his wife are the victims of racism and discrimination. Joan believes that Henry is paranoid and that they have been the victims of a series of events that could have happened to anyone, regardless of their race.

Suggestions

The following questions can be used with the story:

- Do you think that the Greens were discriminated against in Lakewood Island? Why or why not?
- What should the Greens do?
- If you were the Greens what would you do? Why?
- What can the Greens do to determine whether they are victims of discrimination?

Footnotes

[1] Gloria Grant (ed.), In Praise of Diversity (Washington, D.C.: Multicultural Education Publications, 1977), pp.81-83.

[2] Ibid., pp.151-152.

[3] James A. Banks, Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies (Boston, Mass: Allyn and Bacon, 1975) pp. 261-264.

[4] Ibid., pp. 265-268.

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3. Gold, Milton J., Grant, C.A. and Rivlin, H.N. (ed.) In Praise of Diversity: A Resource Book for MultiCultural Education, Washington, D.C.: Multicultural Education Publications, 1977.
4. Grant, Gloria (ed.) In Praise of Diversity: Multicultural Classroom Applications, Washington, D.C.: Multicultural Education Publications, 1977.